

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### ***What is a LEPC?***

An LEPC (local emergency planning committee) is a gathering of representatives in your community that have an interest in hazardous materials safety. Members should include; fire department, law enforcement, health care, media, schools, industry, transportation, public health, VOAD and others. As a group they will identify potential risks that your community faces from hazardous chemicals stored in and/or transported around your community. The LEPC should seek ways to help minimize the risks, prevent accidents, and assist in the development of plans to deal with a chemical emergency. Another core component of an LEPC is education. Through the LEPC the public will be able to seek out information about chemicals in their community and identify safety plans within their own families.

### ***Why do I need an LEPC?***

Your community needs to know they are safe and that there are plans in place to assist with a chemical release. Under the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA) it was mandated that LEPCs be formed as a means of allowing communities to assess their risks from hazardous chemicals and a way for public to exercise it's Right to Know. Nebraska has adopted EPCRA under the Nebraska Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (NEPCRA) – see link for complete details on NEPCRA. The NEPCRA law is administered by the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) and is overseen by the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC).

### ***What is the SERC?***

The SERC consists of 19 members from state and local government, including fire, law, public health, schools, industry, transportation, and public. Members of the SERC are appointed by the Governor and are responsible for appointing members of the LEPCs.

### ***Who is responsible for forming a LEPC in my community?***

Under the NEPCRA law, the SERC has designated each county as a local emergency planning district. Any person with interest in community right to know / public safety can start a LEPC. According to the minimum requirements there needs to be a elected chairperson and a designated coordinator of information (see LEPC minimum requirements.) Please contact the SERC coordinator at (402) 471-7421 for assistance in developing your LEPC.

### ***What will our LEPC be expected to do?***

Your LEPC will be expected to meet at least one a year to review the Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) hazardous materials annex and make necessary changes to the plan. An annual report will need to be completed and sent to the SERC Coordinator for review by the SERC by April 30<sup>th</sup>. The report will include a number of Tier II forms received, a notification that the plan has been reviewed and any changes documented, changes in elected officers, upcoming meeting schedule, copies of public meeting notes, LEPC members names, addresses, phone numbers, area they represent, items of special interest/special projects.

### ***Who pays for all this?***

One of the great things about an LEPC is it's virtually free. An LEPC is a meeting of the minds, a communication tool, a format to bring interested parties and the public together to make their communities safer. While there may be some incidental cost, they should be significant. Some costs of operation are reimbursable under the Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning (HMEP) grant (see the HMEP grant link for further details.)

### ***Can counties join together for a regional LEPC?***

With the approval for the SERC counties can combine their LEPCs. In a case where a county has only limited presence of a hazardous material or emergency response sources, adjoining counties may merge together to form a multi-county emergency planning district. This multi-county LEPC must be able to meet the objectives set forth by each of the participating counties. For more information or assistance please contact the SERC Coordinator.

### ***Where do I get help?***

If you need assistance in developing your LEPC or need ideas for your LEPC begin by contacting Tonya Smith at NEMA (402) 471-7176 or by e-mail at [tonya.smith@nema.ne.gov](mailto:tonya.smith@nema.ne.gov). Members of the SERC, if possible, will also be more than happy to meet with you.